

Members

Rep. Greg Porter, Co-Chairperson
Rep. Shelli VanDemburgh
Rep. Phil GiaQuinta
Rep. Robert Behning
Rep. Jeff Thompson
Rep. Randy Truitt
Sen. Dennis Kruse, Co-Chairperson
Sen. Patricia Miller
Sen. Edward Charbonneau
Sen. Earline Rogers
Sen. Frank Mrvan
Sen. Timothy Skinner



INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Legislative Services Agency
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789
Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554

LSA Staff:

Irma Reinumagi, Attorney for the Committee
Francine Rowley-Lacy, Attorney for the
Committee
David Lusan, Fiscal Analyst for the Committee
Chuck Mayfield, Fiscal Analyst for the Committee

Authority: Legislative Council Resolution 10-01

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: September 30, 2010
Meeting Time: 1:30 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington
St., Room 404
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 2

Members Present: Rep. Greg Porter, Co-Chairperson; Rep. Shelli VanDemburgh;
Rep. Phil GiaQuinta; Rep. Robert Behning; Rep. Jeff
Thompson; Rep. Randy Truitt; Sen. Dennis Kruse, Co-
Chairperson; Sen. Patricia Miller; Sen. Edward Charbonneau;
Sen. Earline Rogers; Sen. Frank Mrvan; Sen. Timothy Skinner.

Members Absent: None.

Co-Chairperson Porter called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m., and, after having the members introduce themselves, called upon Sen. Randy Head to present the meeting's topic, the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education.

The Reggio Emilia approach to pre-kindergarten education was founded in Reggio Emilia, Italy, in 1947. It focuses on collaborative learning and the scientific method of inquiry, in which children are encouraged to question, formulate hypotheses, and prove or disprove these hypotheses.

Dr. Ena Shelley, Dean of the College of Education, Butler University, explained that

¹ These minutes, exhibits, and other materials referenced in the minutes can be viewed electronically at <http://www.in.gov/legislative>. Hard copies can be obtained in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for hard copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for hard copies.

Reggio Emilia sees every child as capable, competent, and full of potential. The teacher is seen as a keen observer of children, assisting them in achieving their potential. Butler is working with Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) to open a laboratory elementary school that will use the Reggio Emilia approach for kindergarten through grade 5. IPS will use the school and Butler as training resources for teachers. The school will open next year. (Dr. Shelley's material is attached as Exhibits A and B.)

Constance Sherman, Executive Director of St. Mary's Child Center, Indianapolis, stated that the Center uses the Reggio Emilia approach for children of poverty. Most children of poverty enter kindergarten two years below grade level; however, children who are involved in high quality early childhood learning experiences enter at or above grade level. (Ms. Sherman's material is attached as Exhibit C.)

Lynne' McGuire, Director of Curriculum and Outreach for St. Mary's Child Center, explained that the role of the teacher in Reggio Emilia is that of guide, facilitator, and co-researcher. Children engage in projects, and document everything they learn through images and writing. Most learning is collaborative, and projects are long-term, covering a variety of academic areas. The children are held to high expectations, and 88% of them enter kindergarten at or above grade level. (Ms. McGuire's material is attached as Exhibit D.)

Ron Smith, Director, Warren Early Childhood Center, stated that the Center provides the foundation for the success of Warren's elementary schools, all of which made AYP this year. He believes that expanding early childhood learning opportunities is one of the best investments in education the state can make. (Mr. Smith's comments are attached as Exhibit E.)

Jeff Kucer, PNC Bank, explained that PNC has made a ten-year, \$100,000,000 commitment to early childhood education, ages zero to five, called Grow Up Great. Research has demonstrated the relationship between quality early childhood education and later success in school, the workplace, and the community; thus, the bank has decided to invest in early childhood education. (Mr. Kucer's comments are attached as Exhibit F.)

In response to questions from the Committee, Jim Payne, former juvenile court judge, Marion County, explained that handling cases of truancy and educational neglect varies from county to county. Often, the results are dependent on the relationship between the court, the prosecutor, and the schools. Some counties have created truancy courts, in which they work with the schools. Educational neglect charges can be brought against parents who prevent their children from going to school. He suggested that having a statewide policy on truancy might be helpful.

The final meeting of the Committee will be held on October 27 at 1:30 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m.